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AN ASCENT OF MOUNT ETNA.

AMONG the habits peculiar to our century, not the least curious is that of mountain-climbing. A hundred years back it was the fashion, even for men of accomplished minds, to regard mountains upon the surface of the earth much as we regard the boils and ulcers which afflict the human body. They were objects to be denounced, as much for their ugliness or awesomeness as for their uselessness. A nice level land like Holland, which incited the husbandman to labour upon it, and repaid his labour with bountiful crops, was indeed something to grow eloquent about. But a mountain was nothing better than a pile of rocks cumbering the earth, of no service to man or beast.

Mountain-climbing, therefore, like steam, is sure to be recorded as one of the peculiarities of our age. In the next century, the chances are that all our high peaks will be possessed of aerial railways, which will of course be the death of Alpine Clubs and elevated pedestrian feats. The man who wishes to get a name for himself with posterity—no matter whether the posterity be domestic merely or world-wide—must make haste and go from continent to continent, scaling peaks with his own unaided legs while he may.

Some such thoughts as these filled my head as my guide and I ambled through the black sand of the lower slopes of Etna on our way to the summit. You see, I had declined to play the part of pedestrian. One must really draw the line of this sort of thing at volcanoes; for of all toilsome work afoot, give me that of the effort to climb in sand an indefinite number of inches deep.

It was a lovely morning, the time about four o'clock. There was a bright moon in the quiet heavens, and the cone of Etna—a fearful height above us—was calmly puffing its smoke towards Italy. My guide, one Sebastian, promised me all sorts of views when we should get to the summit, and meanwhile, heedless of my own nationality, he amused me by drawing a comparison between

the English and German visitors to his beloved volcano. He loved my compatriots, he said, because they generally paid best. But he loved the Germans more because they were wont to be so much more amiable than the English.

When the day began to break, which it did in a severely chill manner, Etna put on a very piquant robe of beauty. The sunlight caught the snow and the eddying steam from her cone, and made them look very fascinating. Then it crept down the lower snow-slopes yard by yard, until at length it shone on Sebastian's head, and made him lift his cap and mutter his orations to his guardian saint. Two or three little birds began to twitter among the chestnut trees of the forest in which we were riding, to remind us that we were not in a land wholly dead and devastated. Earlier in the night we had ridden through much jetty lava, the outflow of 1885, which did an immense amount of damage to the village of Nicolosi, and sent the villagers speeding down to Catania to escape it. The smoke from this lava had caught us in the face, mildly, however; for the ruin had spent its force years ago. Here among the chestnut trees we were out of the way of lava. The trees had been planted by a certain Prince, the owner of Etna and its southern flanks, in the deep sand which had been ejected from the mountain at one time and another in the form of mud; and lustily they seemed to thrive in it. The contrast between the bright green of the leaves of the trees and the black soil from which they proceeded was odd and captivating.

We rode for three hours, until we came to a little house with a red roof on a bluff among the trees. Here at one time had been a crater of Etna, one of the scores upon scores which have broken out upon the immense body of the volcano. At present, the crater was inanimate; perhaps it was really dead; one never knows, however, what a volcano is capable of; and it is quite possible that this very day or to-morrow a spring of molten lava may boil

upwards into the kitchen of the woodmen who live in this little red-roofed house, so remote from the rest of the world. It is the house nearest to Etna, and as such receives divers distinguished visitors in the course of the year.

Here, then, our mules were allowed to drink half a bucketful of water, and rub their noses for encouragement through the tough residue of work that was before them. And here, too, Sebastian and I, and a youthful wood-cutter who had the luck to be at home, shared the contents of our haversacks, which afforded us a breakfast of baked meats, soup, coffee, tongue, fresh oranges, and the red wine of Nicolosi, all of which we enjoyed with no small appetite.

It was in a cheerful mood that we resumed our journey after the meal, and each with an indifferent Italian cigar between his teeth. Etna was still unveiled above us, and the sun had gained no little power while we had tarried. From the chestnut woods, we passed to the naked mountain sides, where mud-slopes, and iron lava streams and rounded heaps of yielding ash or sand, gave us every possible variety of highway. Little by little, Sicily, all the way to Syracuse, was displayed to view beneath us: white towns and green fields and dark woods; shining tortuous water-courses; yellow sands by the curving bays of the coast-line; and the bright blue sea, which did but just eddy upon the sands. Below, all was radiant, warm to the heart, exhilarating. Above, the snow of Etna looked more and more formidable; and the black rocks of the adjacent lesser heights, where they were too steep to hold the snow, were forbidding enough to make the heart of an eighteenth-century tourist withdraw into his boots.

But the worst of these high peaks is the uncertainty by which they are surrounded. Though they stand against the blue with no suggestion of cloud anywhere one minute, you cannot answer for them a minute afterwards. This applies especially to active volcanoes. The steam from their craters has a knack of generating clouds without external help; and if there be but a shred of ordinary cloud within their reach, they will try to seize upon it and make it swell till it be big enough to form a night-cap or a day-cap of a size to hide the mountain top completely from the eyes of inquisitive mortals. Thus, when, with the feeling of a man personally aggrieved, I drew Sebastian's attention to a handful of cloud which seemed to have caught upon one of Etna's lesser peaks, and grew while I looked at it, Sebastian did but shake his shoulders in reply. 'It is not good for us—that!' he said. 'It will be all over us soon, and the view it will be'— A pont of the lip ended his prophecy.

Now, if there is one thing more objectionable than a prophet of evil, it is the fulfilment of the evil prophet's prophecy. I could have forgiven Sebastian his pessimism, if it had not by-and-by been so amply justified. Indeed, it was too quickly accomplished to be referred to the future at all. The puff of wool—as it appeared—distended itself until it had hid half the snow above us, and then there sounded in our ears the noise of a rushing wind, as the vapour came hurtling down upon us and isolated us from all things.

This was supremely tiresome, of course; moreover, it lasted. We journeyed on for an hour until there was as much snow below as above us; and all the time we saw nothing except each other; and I am now free to confess that though I thought Sebastian a fine fellow at the outset of our acquaintanceship, I became mortally tired of him ere the mountain was scaled. In justice to him, however, he was nearly as much disappointed as myself. He endeavoured to console me by expressing his opinion that, after all, if we persevered, we might, at the summit, find ourselves above the clouds and under a pure lucent blue sky. Of course, I myself knew as much, from my experience of high peaks.

When we had journeyed for five hours from the house in the forest, always on our mules, a white shape suddenly loomed through the gray of the clouds close in front of us. A moment later, and we could distinguish the dome of a building, and stout walls round about the building. This was the Observatory, a robust house, nearly ten thousand feet above the sea, but differing from the Observatory of Vesuvius in being devoid of inhabitants. Only when Etna is in an eruptive mood does one or other of the Sicilian Professors of Seismology, or I know not what else, come hither and take up his abode within convenient reach of the crater. At other times, it serves as a house of refuge for the traveller, who may sleep and eat here as comfortably as if he were in the hotel of Nicolosi, some seven thousand feet lower.

The smell of sulphur at this point became very strong. It was clear, even without the aid of metrical instruments, that we were nearing the summit. I declined to delay and drink wine in the precincts of this elevated nest, with its beds of straw, knives and forks and cups for the service of tourists. It would have been too humiliating if, by such sensual dallying, we were to lose any opportunity of a prospect which might in the meantime be offered us by Etna's cone.

We now left our laggard mules, to get what comfort they could from a pasture of snow and cinders. The climb up the cone of the mountain, which begins almost from the walls of the Observatory, is far too steep for a mule; and indeed the man who trusted even to that sagacious quadruped's instinct to carry him safely through the bombardment of rocks and molten matter which he has to face, and also to lead him along the edge of the crater itself, might well be envied for his philosophy and confidence.

At this stage in the day I was forced to bless Sebastian for his augury of good, because it happened to be fulfilled in part. We had left the clouds below us. It was delightful to shake the last shred of them from our feet, and then to look down at their dense mass, and feel that we were superior to them, even as we were superior for the moment to most of the denizens of our hard-working world. The blue sky above our heads was bright to a marvel. Nor could the eddying vapour from the crater, to which we slowly fought our way, sully these glorious heavens to any extent. It rose with a white whirl against the sky, and then drifted towards the north-east with easy, graceful movement.

Our climb was not easy. The slopes of the

crater were at a stiff angle; and their substance was of soft mud, that had been liquid, impregnated with ash and masses of lava. Now and again a shower of fiery cinders, interspersed with bigger stones glowing with red-heat, fell with a thud or a sprinkling sound to the right or left of us, above us or behind us. How we escaped them, I cannot tell. It must have been due to Sebastian's shrewdness; for, after every violent eddy of smoke upwards, he kept a brisk lookout from under the shade of his palm, and directed my steps with the promptitude of a successful general. Though the height of the summit above the Observatory is only about twelve hundred feet, we were more than an hour ascending it. This will give some idea of the severity of the climb, and perhaps of the perils which it was necessary to guard against in no rash mood of hurry.

At last, however, we stood on a level, and the boiling vapour was seen seething up from a great yawning pit at our feet. 'Behold it!' cried Sebastian, with a salute, bareheaded, to the mountain; and I realised that I was ten thousand eight hundred feet above the sea, and in as convenient a situation for a sensational ending as a man may find anywhere in the world. Etna responded to Sebastian's civilities with a terrific bellow, and an out-throw of ashes and rocks that put me in much doubt of my ability to live through it. The stench of the sulphur, too, was villainous, and though I adopted Sebastian's plan of binding a handkerchief over my mouth and nostrils, it was all I could do to draw one satisfactory breath in ten. Add to this, that the ground upon which we stood was composed of burning ashes and hot mud, and it will be apparent that Etna's summit is not altogether fit for the daintily-shod tourists who climb Vesuvius by the *funicolare*, nor an easy spot for the indulgence of poetical rhapsodies.

Some say the crater of Etna is two miles round; others are satisfied with half the estimate. The truth is that both reckonings may be justified. At one time the crater is two miles in circumference; at other times, more or less. The volcano is so terribly active that it is always revising and reshaping itself. The out-cast of ash one week—most of which falls back into the crater obliquely, so as to form an inclined bank—may be so prodigious that the crater itself seems curtailed of a third of its previous area. But perhaps on the eighth day that part of the floor—to speak loosely—of the crater which has to support this growing weight of material suddenly gives way; and not only all the newly-formed boundaries, but part of the original environing rim of the crater, fall in; and so the circuit of the crater is enlarged. This process is always going on with greater or less rapidity. And the fact that it occurs so constantly makes the traveller's measurements of so little permanent value that he may generally be counselled to spare himself all trouble in the matter.

If I may credit Sebastian, we were fortunate enough to see Etna in a very impetuous mood. His roaring and evacuations were both on a vast scale. But I could have wished it otherwise, when I found that, thanks to this fervour, it was impossible to see into the crater itself, the

vapour was so very dense. But I saw enough to have my respect for the mountain raised very high in comparison with that which I feel for Vesuvius. It is no very heroic feat to descend into Vesuvius's crater, though a dangerous one; but the sides of Etna's crater were perpendicular, which gave the place a character of awe much transcending that which Vesuvius inspires.

Well, we tarried on the summit an hour, until my boots could hold out no longer, and until certain ominous signs made Sebastian wish to move homewards. Something of Sicily we saw beyond the clouds which girdled us, but it was very vague. The mountains of Lower Calabria, in Italy, seemed a part of Sicily, the narrow strait being quite expunged. For the rest, I gave my attention to Etna solely. The ominous signs I have mentioned were an excited movement in the nether clouds, as if they proposed to ascend to our own elevation. Ordinarily, this would have been a mark of better weather; but Sebastian had a different theory. He fancied it would be the prelude to a thunder-storm. The electricity in the darkening clouds would meet the electricity of the volcano, and the consequences would be alarming. And so, though not without a wish to stay to see so sublime a conflict, reluctantly I yielded to Sebastian's wish, and we left Etna to himself again. Some day, however, I propose to return to the mountain with a portmanteau full of books and manuscript paper. If a man cannot read and write to advantage in a house like the Observatory, I fail to see what inspiration solitude can ever assume to beget.

DUMARESQ'S DAUGHTER.

BY GRANT ALLEN, AUTHOR OF 'IN ALL SHADES,'
'THIS MORTAL COIL,' ETC.

CHAPTER XVI.—ON THE SPUR OF THE MOMENT.

To Linnell, the blow was a very severe one. At thirty, when a man loves, he loves in earnest. No playing then with light loves in the portal: no time then to wince and relent and refrain: the wounds he gets at that age go deep and rankle. As Linnell returned to the Red Lion that morning he felt the world was indeed a blank to him. Once only in his life had he indulged in the madness of daring to think a woman loved him: he had put that woman to the test, oh, such a tiny test, and found her wanting past all belief. Henceforth, he would hold no girl a goddess. The game was played—and lost. Linnell was tired of it.

He had left the oriental picture behind him at the Wren's Nest. The portrait of Haviland Dumaresq himself stood fronting him on the easel in his own sitting-room. It wanted several hours' work yet of its final completion. That fiery energy of despair he had felt at the cottage still possessed his soul. Seizing his palette, all on fire, and working away with a will from vivid memory alone—a memory now quickened by his unnatural exaltation—Linnell proceeded to fill in the remaining details, and to place upon the canvas a breathing, speaking, living portrait of the great philosopher in his happiest aspect. It was not Dumaresq as he appeared to the artist the day before on the west cliffs—not that shattered and disappointed old man of

seventy, pleading hard against his own earlier and better self for the lowest and vulgarest estimate of life—but Dumaresq as he appeared on that first glorious evening at the Wren's Nest, with the heroic air of resignation and simplicity he had worn on his face, while he told in plain unvarnished language the story of his own grand and noble devotion in the morning of his days to an impersonal cause. Linnell remembered every curve of the features, every flash of the eyes, every turn of the expression, as Dumaresq had unfolded before them in full detail that strange history of magnificent self-denial. That was the Dumaresq that should live for ever upon his earnest canvas: that was the Dumaresq whose lineaments posterity should transcribe from his hand on the title-page of five thousand future editions of the *Encyclopedic Philosophy*. For Linnell was too single-minded in his admiration of Dumaresq to let contempt for one aspect of the man's nature interfere with appreciation for the greatness of his life-work. Let him be emotionally whatever he might, intellectually, Linnell felt sure in his own soul, Haviland Dumaresq towered like a giant among the lesser and narrower thinkers of his age.

After three hours' hard work, he desisted at last, and standing back in the room, gazed close with a critical eye at the portrait. His instincts told him it was a magnificent picture: he had put his very heart's blood into each stroke of the pencil. The landlady came up while he worked, and announced lunch; but Linnell would not lay aside his brush for a second till his task was done. 'Give me a glass of claret and a sandwich,' he cried hastily; and the landlady, lamenting sore that all them nice sweetbreads was cooked for nothing, was fain perforce to acquiesce in his Spartan humour. But when the last touch had been put to the picture, and Dumaresq himself gazed forth from the canvas, a thinker confessed in all his greatness, Linnell stood before it with folded hands, astonished at his own unexpected force and originality. Never before in his life had he painted with all the inborn energy of his nature unrestrained by petty fears and unworthy self-criticisms. Never before had he so trusted to his own true genius; and the result of that proud and justified confidence was apparent at a glance on the easel before him.

Women take refuge from disappointment in tears; men in action, and above all in work. The work had soothed Linnell's nerves gradually. He sat down to his desk, when the task was complete, and wrote a hasty note with trembling hands to Psyche. It was the first he had ever written to her: it would be the last. His one love-letter. And then no more hereafter, whatever come with years.

DEAR MISS DUMARESQ—I leave Petherton for ever this evening. I leave England for ever to-morrow. The oriental picture is at the Wren's Nest. I beg you to keep it as some slight memento of me. The portrait of your father I have finished from memory this afternoon. Let it remain at the Red Lion till dry; then kindly send for it and take it home. You were quite right in thinking your father's features ought

not to be lost to the world and to posterity. That they may not be lost, I beg you to accept this faint representation of them—not wholly unworthy, I venture to believe, of the striking original—during your own lifetime, and to leave it by will at your death as a sacred trust to the National Portrait Gallery. Before this reaches you, I shall have left the inn. No answer can then find me anywhere.—Good-bye for ever.—Faithfully yours,

C. A. L.

He folded it up, took it out, and posted it. Then he returned, all tremulous, to the Red Lion, packed up his belongings in his little portmanteau, paid his bill, and drove down to catch the last train to London. The dream of his life was gone for ever. He didn't care much now what became of him.

At the station he jumped lightly into the first carriage he happened to see. It was almost empty, but one man sat in the far corner, looking out of the window. As the train moved out, the man turned. Linnell recognised him. It was a journalist acquaintance of other days, a man on the staff of a London daily, who acted at times as a special war correspondent.

Linnell was by no means pleased at the unexpected recognition, for he would far have preferred to be left alone, and to nurse his chagrin and mortification by himself: but there was no help for it now: the journalist had seen him, and it was too late to change into another carriage. So he gulped down his regret as best he might, and said in as cheerful a voice as he could muster: 'Hullo, Considine, on the move, as I suppose! And where are you off to?'

'Khartoum, this time,' the easy-going journalist replied jauntily. 'Hot work, too, at this time of year. I only received orders by wire to Plymouth at nine this morning, and I leave Charing Cross at nine to-morrow. But it's nothing when you're used to it. I'm all on the job, you know. Bless you, I was sent out to Zululand once, much quicker than that. Down at the office at six one evening, in comes a wire, "Troubles in Zululand." Says the chief: "Considine, me boy, you're off to Africa." Says I: "When?" Says he: "Steamer sailed from Southampton yesterday. Go overland, and catch it at Lisbon." So off I rushed to Cannon Street in the clothes I stood up in, and just managed to bundle into the night-mail, without even so much as a pocket comb by way of luggage: bought a portmanteau and a few things I needed in a spare hour at Paris; and was at Pietermaritzburg, as fresh as a daisy, before the fighting had seriously begun on the frontier. I call that smart. But a job like this is really quite easy for me.'

'Well, but you don't know Arabic!' Linnell cried, a little taken aback.

'Arabic, is it? Sorrow a word, me dear fellow. But what of that? I've gone the world over with English alone, and as much of every native lingo I come across as will allow me to swear at the beastly niggers to the top of my wishes in their own tongue.'

Linnell looked graver. 'But you ought to know Arabic, really,' he said. 'Any man who goes to Khartoum nowadays is to some extent liable to take his life in his hands for the time

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being. I've been a good deal about in Africa myself, you know, and for my own part I wouldn't like to trust myself in the interior at present unless I could pass at a pinch as a decent Mohammedan. That is to say, if I valued my life—which I don't, as it happens—but that's nothing.'

'You speak Arabic, I suppose?' Considine said suggestively.

'Like English, almost,' the painter answered with a nod. 'I'd pass for a Mohammedan easily anywhere in Africa.'

'Shall you go out there this winter? You generally do, I recollect; and this time there'll be lots of amusement. Things are getting lively on the Upper Nile. They'll be having a row up yonder before long. I expect squalls, myself, before the winter's over, and I wouldn't be out of the fun myself for a sovereign, I can tell you.'

Linnell laughed. 'You're a born Irishman,' he answered good-humouredly. 'You love a fight, as your countryman loves to brandish his shillelagh at Donnybrook Fair. Well, no; I hadn't definitely canvassed the Nile for this next winter, I confess; but now I come to think of it, it might be worth while to see the fighting. I don't much care where I go now, and to a man who's thoroughly tired of his life, Khartoum at present offers exceptional attractions.'

'That's right, me boy,' the correspondent cried, slapping him hard on the back. 'You speak with the spirit of an officer and a gentleman. You'd better pack up your portmanteau at once and come along off with me by the next opportunity. A man who can wear a burnous like a native and jabber Arabic's the right man for the place this blessed minute. I've got the very post in my gift to suit you. It's an artist you are, and an artist I'm looking for. The *Porte-Crayon* people are on the hunt for a fellow who can draw to go out and get himself killed at Khartoum in their service. Liberal terms: first-rate pay: a pension if wounded: a solatium for your widow if killed outright: and an elegant tomb over your cold ashes in Westminster Abbey. What more can ye want? It's a splendid chance. You can paint the Mahdi as black as you like, and no criticism. Sure, there'll be nobody else on the spot to contradict you.'

The idea fell in well with Linnell's present humour. When a man has just been disappointed in love, he takes gloomy views as to the future of the universe. Linnell was anxious to go away anywhere from England, and not indisposed to get killed and be done with it. At Khartoum his various talents and acquirements would be worth more to himself and the world at large than anywhere else. He wanted action; he wanted excitement. The novelty of the position would turn the current of his pessimistic thoughts. And besides, if he died—for he didn't conceal from himself the fact that there was danger in the scheme—he saw how his death might be made useful to Psyche. Though she wasn't the Psyche he had once dreamt about, he loved her still, and he would love her for ever. He could leave all he possessed to Psyche. That would be heaping coals of fire, indeed, on her head; but even Haviland Dumaresq, probably, would not refuse to take a dead man's money.

And Psyche then would have what she lived for. She wanted riches; and this would ensure her them. It would be better so. Psyche would derive far more pleasure from that heavy metal than ever he could.

'Really,' he said, with a bitter smile, 'I don't know, Considine, that what you propose mightn't very well suit me. Would it be too late now to see the *Porte-Crayon* people after we get up to town this very evening?'

'Too late, is it?' the correspondent echoed, delighted. 'Never a bit, I tell you. We'll ring them up out of the sleep of the just. Though they're rascals enough, if it comes to that, to deserve to lie awake from sunset to cockcrow. They're just dying to get some fellow to volunteer for the place. Old Lingard'd see you if it was two in the morning. You can arrange to-night, and pack at once, and come off with me by the first continental train to-morrow. Why, I want a man who can speak Arabic myself. Camels I understand; I rode some dozens of them to death—may Heaven forgive me for it—pushing on to Candahar in the Afghan business: but Arabic, I admit, 's one too many for me. I'll take you round to see old Lingard at once, when we get up to town, and we'll be whirling across France in a Pullman car by this time to-morrow. We'll catch the *train de luxe* at Paris, and you'll just have time to meet the Alexandrine steamer before she leaves Brindisi.'

Linnell's mind was made up in a moment. He would go to Africa. And sure enough, by eleven o'clock that night it was all settled; Linnell had accepted the proffered post as special artist for the *Porte-Crayon* at Khartoum; and Psyche lay, white as death, with Linnell's letter pressed against her heaving bosom, on her own little bed in the Wren's Nest at Petherton.

AMERICAN MONSTERS NOW EXTINCT.

AMERICA is a land of big things—big trees, big valleys, mammoth caves, big cities, and big shows; so that we are hardly surprised when we sometimes hear of American gentlemen emulating the fancy of 'Chibiabos, the marvellous storyteller, the great boaster,' in one of Longfellow's most beautiful poems. But we never hear our transatlantic cousins boasting that the animals of their country are larger or more formidable than those inhabiting other regions. As a matter of fact, certain big and powerful creatures, such as lions, tigers, elephants, and giraffes, are conspicuous by their absence.

But it was not always so. Time was—ages and ages ago—when what we now call 'the New World' was inhabited by the strangest and the most gigantic forms of life that the world has seen. Geologists such as Professors Marsh and Cope, in searching among the stony records of certain geological periods, have discovered the remains of a host of reptiles of great diversity, often of stupendous size, and in some cases so unlike any of the present inhabitants of the globe, whether living on land or in the sea, that we might almost fancy ourselves in fairyland, as we try to clothe the bones with living flesh, and

to picture them as they really were, walking or crawling on the ground, paddling in the water, and flying in the air. The creatures of a fertile imagination could scarcely be more strange ; and to the student of extinct reptiles, the 'dragons' of old days are hardly so wonderful as these primeval monsters would have appeared to man, had it been permitted to the human race to be their contemporaries.

It is difficult for us, living in an age of quadrupeds (Mammals), and accustomed to the present state of affairs, in which reptiles play only a subordinate part, to picture the life of a continent where they played the chief part. But such was undoubtedly the case at a certain period in the world's history. It is not to be implied that these wonderful extinct reptiles were confined to the American continent, for such is not the case. Some very remarkable skeletons have been dug out of strata in England and other parts of Europe. Among such are the great 'Fish-lizard' (*Ichthyosaurus*) found in Dean Buckland's time, and described in all text-books of geology ; also the curious 'flying dragons,' known as *Pterodactyls*, with their wings on their fingers (like bats), enabling them to fly. We do not propose to speak of these, as most of our readers will have heard or read something about them, or perhaps have seen the models in the gardens of the Crystal Palace. But we propose to confine our remarks entirely to a group of fossil reptiles, called *Deinosaura*, of which very little was known twenty years ago. For our knowledge of this wonderful order of reptiles we are mainly indebted to the persevering labours of the above-named Professors, who, with their pupils and others—sometimes guarded from hostile Indians by an escort of soldiers—have in the Far West dug up the fossilised remains of these ancient creatures. The results of their labours have not yet attained a compact form ; so that the student is obliged to hunt through many volumes of different scientific journals in order to read the numerous 'papers' in which the creatures are described and reconstructed. Having spent some time in so doing, we now put together a few notes on *Deinosaura* for those who would like to know something about them.

One difficulty which meets us at the outset is that many fossil creatures, and especially *Deinosaura*, were so very different in character from those living now, that even in cases where the remains are complete and well preserved, naturalists find it no easy matter to assign to them their proper places in the reptile class and to decide in which tribe they should be included. Thus it has been found necessary to create new orders or tribes for some of the fossil forms. Such is the case with *Deinosaura* ; they are placed quite by themselves ; we cannot class them with any of the four existing orders, of which turtles, snakes, lizards, and crocodiles are examples. For the sake of those who may be familiar with geological terms, we may mention that *Deinosaura* flourished during the three successive periods known as the New Red Sandstone, the Jurassic, and the Cretaceous or Chalk period.

First, with regard to the name which has been given to these creatures ; it means 'Terrible lizards ;' and doubtless their 'aspect' when alive was 'terrible.' This has been generally accepted,

although Professor Huxley has proposed the name *Ornithoscelida*, or 'bird-legged,' which would make prominent one of their most striking and important characters—namely, a strong resemblance to birds of the ostrich tribe, the 'running-birds.' Meyer, another great authority, proposed the name *Pachypoda*, or 'thick-footed.' We mention these facts in order to point out the peculiar mixture of characters presented by this great and varied group of reptiles. Thus, the name *Deinosaura*, given by Professor Owen, connects them with the lizards ; the second name connects them with birds ; and the third name is suggestive of our modern pachyderms—the elephant, hippopotamus, and rhinoceros, with their thick skins and big feet.

They varied very much in size : some were only two feet long and lightly built ; others were truly colossal in size and power, thus rivalling the whales and elephants of the present day. In one of these giant reptiles the upper bone of the hindleg was five and a half feet long ; in another the same bone was six feet three inches long—a great deal bigger than the same bone of an elephant—and the reptile itself attained a length of from eighty to a hundred feet ! The remains of *Deinosaura* come chiefly from the Jurassic and Cretaceous rocks. They were doubtless very numerous during the preceding period of the New Red Sandstone ; but as we have to rely mainly on footprints and fragments of skeletons, we do not know very much about those of that period.

Many strange creatures lived at the same time ; but these *Deinosaura* exhibit a 'new departure,' for their skeletons show a very marked approach to birds. Without introducing technical details, it will be sufficient for our purpose to mention one of the best known examples—namely, the famous *Iguanodon*, described by the late Dr Mantell. Some huge bones of this creature were found in Sussex, and may be seen in the Brighton Museum, also at South Kensington (Natural History Museum). Since Dr Mantell's day, complete specimens of this monster have been unearthed, so that it is now possible to restore it, and form a very fair idea of its appearance, since every bone is known. This ponderous *Deinosaur* was from thirty to fifty feet long, and fed on the leaves of trees in the neighbourhood of the Weald. In Wealden strata are found gigantic impressions, or tracks, which it can hardly be doubted were made by this creature ; but they show impressions of only three toes, and so have, in spite of their size, a strangely bird-like character. The fore-limbs were quite small, and possessed five fingers ; but the hind-limbs were enormous ; and there is little doubt that it was in the habit of sitting erect on its hindlegs, because we do not find impressions of the fore-limbs. It had a long neck and small head. Now, these are all bird-like characters. Footprints very similar to those found in Sussex have been discovered in the famous New Red Sandstone strata of the Connecticut Valley in America. Indeed, the resemblance to bird-tracks is in some cases so striking that serious differences of opinion arose as to whether they were made by birds or by reptiles. Even now, it would seem that some of them were produced by birds, although no remains of birds have been discovered there ;

while further knowledge of the Deinosaurus enables us to understand how the larger tracks were made by Deinosaurus, like Iguanodon, accustomed to walk on their hindlegs. Dr Hitchcock, who has studied this remarkable and varied series of footprints, believes that they were produced not only by birds and reptiles, but also by lizards, frogs, and turtles, &c. They have been found in more than twenty places, scattered throughout an extent of nearly eighty miles and in a succession of strata.

Beside the tracks are seen in some places little round marks, which are the marks of raindrops—records of showers which once fell on a soft sandy surface while Deinosaurus and other primeval creatures were walking about. Strange that these apparently trivial actions should be so beautifully recorded in the rocks of the earth's crust! Doubtless the sun came out as soon as the shower was over, and so the soft surface dried and hardened; and later on received a layer of sediment, thus becoming buried up and preserved for future ages, when the geologist would behold them with delight, and interpret to the human race their deep significance.

Deinosaurus were a very varied group of animals, partly amphibious in their habits, possessing two pairs of limbs fitted for use on 'terra firma,' and provided with claws at their extremities. As previously remarked, the hind-limbs were generally much larger than the fore-limbs. In general structure, they are considered to have been intermediate between the modern running-birds, such as the ostrich and typical reptiles. They may therefore be regarded as 'missing links' between reptiles and birds. Some were vegetable feeders; others preferred a more stimulating diet, and were carnivorous. In each case the structure of the creature was adapted to its habits, the carnivorous forms being less huge and clumsy, and generally adapted for making rapid movements in seeking or catching their prey, just as cats, lions, or tigers are more lightly built than oxen or elephants. But the teeth and claws in these cases are the most certain evidence of their habits. Some Deinosaurus walked, or perhaps even hopped, on land; a few others probably haunted the trees, their bodies being very small and lightly built. Some had very solid bones; while others had light bones permeated with air-passages—another bird-like feature. Some had long necks and small heads; others, short necks and large heads. There is one form known with a powerful horn on its skull, like a rhinoceros. Some, like crocodiles, were provided with a defensive armour in the shape of long plates on the back, or even long and prickly spines. Others had no such protection, but were more powerful in attack.

The greatest number of Deinosaurus have been obtained from American strata of a certain geological period known as the Jurassic, to which the well-known Lias and Oolites belong. So numerous are the American Jurassic Deinosaurus, and generally so well preserved, that Professor Marsh has attempted their classification. He groups them in five divisions, to each of which he gives a Latin name roughly indicating their prevailing character. These divisions are as follows, the Latin names being turned into English: (1) The Lizard-footed—vegetable feeders

of very great size, with fore and hind limbs of nearly equal length, walking on all-fours, and with the limb-bones solid. In this group occur some enormous Deinosaurus, which we will presently describe. (2) The Plated Lizards, so called because their skin was provided with an armour of bony plates. Some were of gigantic frame. The hind-limbs were very large, and the fore-limbs small. They probably walked on all-fours. (3) The Bird-footed—also herbivorous, with hind-limbs so much larger than the fore-limbs that they show an approach to the type of birds. It is almost certain that they habitually sat in an erect position. The limb-bones were hollow, another bird-like character. Some, like Iguanodon, were of great size—namely, about thirty feet long. (4) The Beast-footed. These were formidable carnivorous creatures, which generally walked erect, their progression being in many cases assisted by a powerful tail, which they may have used in leaping, as kangaroos do. The fore-limbs were very small, and they had prehensile claws. Their limb-bones were hollow. Evidently their structure was adapted to carnivorous habits, for they would be capable of rapid movements. One of the members of this division had a horn on its head, which, if we may judge from the rhinoceros, must have been a powerful weapon of offence. (5) The Leaping-footed. These creatures, which Professor Marsh only doubtfully includes among Deinosaurus, had curious hind-feet specially adapted for leaping. Probably they had great gifts in this direction. Lastly, there is one form of Deinosaur which presents more bird-like affinities than any other—namely, the little *Compsognathus longipes*, from the famous lithographic stone of Bavaria. It is so peculiar that the Professor places it in a group by itself. It has toothed jaws, and a head supported on a long and slender neck. Professor Huxley concludes that 'it is impossible to look at the conformation of this strange reptile and to doubt that it hopped, or walked, in an erect or semi-erect position, after the manner of a bird, to which its long neck, slight head, and anterior limbs must have given it an extraordinary resemblance.' Is it possible that this little Deinosaur represents how reptiles became birds? Who shall say?

In the Oxford Museum are some gigantic bones of an English Deinosaur, which, because it was compared to a whale, has been named *Cetiosaurus*. It belongs to our first division. The following extracts are taken from Professor Phillips' account of this creature: 'Probably when "standing at ease," not less than ten feet in height and of bulk in proportion, this creature was unmatched in magnitude and physical strength by any of the largest inhabitants of the land or sea.' (This was written before the larger American forms were discovered.) 'Did it live in the sea, in fresh water, or on land? This question cannot be answered, as in the case of Ichthyosaurus, by an appeal to the accompanying organic remains, for some of the bones lie in marine deposits, others in situations marked by estuarine conditions, and in fluviatile accumulations. Was it fitted to live exclusively in water? Such an idea was at one time entertained, and it is often suggested by the mere magnitude of the creature, which would seem to have an easier life floating in water than lifting its huge bulk and moving with slow steps

along the ground. But neither of these arguments is valid. The ancient earth was trodden by larger quadrupeds than our elephants.' He thinks it may have led an amphibious life, haunting both land and water. Only one small tooth was found; but from this Professor Phillips concludes that it was a vegetable feeder.

The best known American Deinosaurus belonging to this division were *Brontosaurus* and *Atlantosaurus*. The former of these veritable monsters is now thoroughly known. Professor Marsh has drawn a complete restoration of the skeleton. It attained a length of fifty feet, and is estimated to have had a 'live-weight' of twenty tons! It had a small head, very long neck, solid bones, and a long heavy tail. The hindlegs are of enormous size, suggestive of an elephant rather than a reptile. The small head and brain seem to indicate a slow-moving reptile. It was entirely without offensive or defensive weapons, or bony plates on the skin. In habit it was more or less amphibious, and probably fed on aquatic and other succulent vegetation. Perhaps the individuals which have been found got 'mired,' and so died in the mud. The largest of all the Deinosaurus was *Atlantosaurus*, which attained a length of nearly one hundred feet! But, since the bones have not all been found, it is impossible at present to give a description of this reptile. The 'cup-bones' or vertebrae are larger than those of the largest whales.

The unfortunate scarcity of Deinosaurian remains in the New Red Sandstone rocks both of England and America is matter for regret; but there can be little doubt that this great order of reptiles was then flourishing. If they have bequeathed very few of their bones to posterity, they have at least left their 'tracks' behind them—'Footprints on the sands of time,' in a literal sense.

The Deinosaurus show us the reptile class in the height of their power. The evolutionist believes that reptiles developed into birds; but whether this wonderful transformation actually took place through the Deinosaurus we cannot yet tell. At least these creatures mark the highest point in the scale of animal life attained by reptiles as such. After that they began a downward career; and from being 'lords of creation' for three geological periods, began to take a lower place, and make way for a higher type, the Quadrupeds, or Mammals, which are now at the head of the animal kingdom. Their origin is involved in obscurity. They seem to be related to crocodiles; but we have no evidence 'before the court' of geologists of crocodiles passing into Deinosaurus.

Geology reveals to us the fact that classes of animals rise and fall, are exalted and then brought low, just as empires among men. The Deinosaurus were not destined to remain for more than a certain time in their exalted position. Already in the New Red Sandstone period the usurpers had appeared on the scene in the shape of humble little quadrupeds, creatures apparently unable to cope with their rivals of the reptile class, but destined, as ages rolled on, to grow in power and strength, and so to attain the proud position they now occupy. One cannot help wondering how the victory was accomplished. But they had a more developed brain than reptiles; that

would give them an immense advantage in the 'struggle for existence.' Thus, it would seem that brains carried the day, and so Mammals now 'hold the field' against all their enemies.

If there is one truth which more than another is brought out by the study of geology, it is that, from the most ancient period down to the present day, there has been a gradual introduction from time to time of higher and higher forms of life on this planet, thus constituting a kind of drama of existence.

When our poet wrote, 'All the world's a stage,' he thought only of 'men and women,' whom he calls 'merely players.' But the geologist sees a wider application of the words as he reviews the great drama of past life on the globe, and finds that plants and animals, too, 'have their exits and their entrances.' Nay, more, the 'strange eventful history' of a human life sketched by the master-hand might fitly be chosen to illustrate the birth and growth of the tree of life, the development and expansion of which are so emphatically proved by 'the testimony of the rocks.'

MY AUNT CECILIA.

BY ARTHUR H. NORWAY.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS.—CHAP. I.

I MUST have been very young when my Aunt Cecilia took charge of me, for I cannot call to mind any save the dimmest recollections of my state of life before the occurrence of that event. She was a kind and gentle lady, with a singular capacity for exciting love in all who had dealings with her; and I know that from the first I was content to be under her charge. If my change of life caused me any wonder—I do not recollect that it did—that feeling was very transient; and in the London home to which my aunt transported me it was quickly lost.

My aunt's house stood in one of the roads which converge towards Westminster Bridge on the south of the river—roads which are now given over almost wholly to lodging-house keepers, but in which rich merchants once did not disdain to dwell, ordering their lives with a simple dignity, commoner in old days than it is at present. Aunt Cecilia chose the house, I believe, because it was so quiet. It stood back at some distance from the road; and the garden-beds which lay before it were inclosed by a high wall, topped with a row of pollard lime-trees. Even the front garden was thus quite private, and Aunt Cecilia could work in it without fear of being overlooked. At the back of the house was another garden, nearly the whole of which was occupied by a lawn, always smooth shaven, and surrounded by beds of homely flowers, marigolds, hollyhocks, mignonette, and tall bushes of white roses. It was a wonderful garden for the town; and beyond it was a stable-yard, with stalls for eight horses. These were always vacant in our time, and served as a playground for me.

The house, though comfortable, was not large ; and my aunt, as I know now, was not rich. Neither her means nor her inclination permitted her to see society ; and I do not remember that she had any acquaintances in the neighbourhood, except the Rector, a tall, courtly, old gentleman, somewhat bowed with years. He was a frequent visitor at our house ; for having no wife with whom to discuss those points of parish duty on which a lady's opinion is of value, he was glad at times to consult my aunt. There were not many ladies in the parish, the Rector used to say, and I suppose there were not.

In the first years of my residence with Aunt Cecilia, however, another visitor occasionally came to see us—my godmother. She came at long intervals, and always seemed sad and tearful, though she reserved smiles enough for me. I was very fond of her, for she had in perfection the art of amusing children ; and I was never happier than when standing beside her knee, listening to some old legend of Arthur and his knights, or to some tale of the merchant adventurers of Sir Richard Grenville's time, such as made the blood dance and tingle in my veins.

It was in October that she came for the last time. I was crossing the garden from the stables when I saw her, in the deep black dress she always wore, push aside the flame-coloured wreaths of Virginia creeper which hung across the garden-door of the house, and come out to meet me, followed by Aunt Cecilia. I always think of her as I saw her then. I can recall at will her girlish figure, hung round with glowing tinted leaves ; and her hair, which, though closely confined, caught the sunlight and glistened like threads of gold. But it was her face that impressed itself most clearly on my memory ; and I know now it was full of a sorrow which I was then too young to comprehend.

'He grows very tall, Cecilia,' said my godmother, with a constrained sound in her voice. 'He will be seven in March.' As she said this, Aunt Cecilia laid her hand caressingly on the other woman's shoulder, and went on : 'You will know he is well cared for.'

'If you should die, Cecilia ?'

'I shall not die,' my aunt answered, 'until I am not needed any longer.—Be at ease, Fanny : I will not play you false.'

My godmother glanced at Aunt Cecilia as if she could not trust herself to speak ; and then, kneeling down on the grass, she drew me towards her and threw her arms around me. 'Oh my child,' she cried, 'I am going away from you, so far away that I may never see you again. Don't forget me, Osmond : always remember me : think of your playfellow often, often, for I love you dearly.'

Before I could answer her, she rose suddenly, and seemed to regain control over herself. All that afternoon she was the merry companion I knew so well, telling me over and over again the tales I loved to hear, always with such a

zest and enjoyment that I had never thought her so amusing. When I went to bed, she took off a black ribbon, from which a little cross of gold was suspended, and put it round my neck. 'Here is a present for you, Osmond,' she said. 'Try, for my sake, not to lose it. Think of me whenever you touch it, child. It is all I have to give you.'

I dreamt of my godmother that night, and more than once I could have fancied I woke up far enough to be conscious that she was standing by my bed, shading her candle from my eyes. I learned afterwards that she had come many times in the night to look at me as I lay asleep ; but in the morning she had gone.

That afternoon, my aunt took me to Gravesend ; and as soon as we arrived there, we went on board a great steamer which was lying in the river. My godmother was standing on the deck, and when she saw me she caught me to her breast, clinging to me as if she were some wounded animal and I some shelter that offered her security.

'He will forget me, Cecilia,' she said, striving to control her tears ; 'he will forget me altogether.'

'I do not think Osmond is so changeable,' replied my aunt. 'I should think meanly of him if he forgot you.'

'I will not ; indeed, I will not,' I protested.

'Poor child ! he doesn't know what he is promising,' my godmother said with a wintry smile.

At that, Aunt Cecilia took her by the hand and led her apart. I did not hear what passed between them ; but I noticed that my godmother seemed a little comforted by it. Aunt Cecilia stood very erect beside the bulwarks of the ship, holding my godmother's hand ; and at the conclusion of what she had to say, kissed her as solemnly as if she were sanctifying a vow.

Immediately after that, the shore-bell rang ; and almost before I realised that the parting was over, my aunt and I were in the tender, and the great ship was slowly put in motion. As long as we could distinguish my godmother's girlish figure, straining after the last glimpse of us, we waved our handkerchiefs ; and long after that, after even the lights of the vessel had faded and disappeared into the gloom of the autumn evening, my aunt stood motionless upon the quay, gazing down the river. When it was quite dark, she took my hand, and we went sadly home in silence.

The impressions of the days I have described are the strongest which remain from my childhood ; and I have no doubt that every sentence spoken in my hearing on these occasions remains unaltered in my memory. Many a night in my sleep I heard my godmother's tearful voice, and woke stretching out my arms in search of her with a vague feeling of desertion for which I never could account.

I may as well say now, before I lay aside the subject for a time, that four years afterwards we heard of my godmother's death. I doubt whether in all England there were two sadder hearts that day.

I have no distinct recollection of the years that followed. They were uneventful and placid.

I remained at a private school in the neighbourhood until I was thirteen years old; and then, being in somewhat delicate health, I was sent to spend six months with a clergyman near Epsom, in order that my health might be recruited, and that I might at the same time undergo some preparation for the larger school in London to which I was to go on my return. I had one fellow-pupil, a boy named Sinclair. From this point the story of my life properly begins. I often wonder whether it was chance alone which brought me to this country vicarage.

Sinclair's father was British consul at Trieste; his uncle was Port-admiral at Portsmouth. He himself was destined for the navy, and had been sent home to the charge of his uncle, in order that he might be educated the more carefully for his future profession.

The choice of a tutor for him was not happy. Mr Calthrop, with whom we were placed, was an excellent scholar; but of the art of teaching he understood as little as of that of control, and long ere I appeared on the scene, Sinclair had mastered him, and read each day as much, or as little, as he chose. My arrival naturally did not render my fellow-pupil more inclined to study; and as it was considered necessary for me to be much in the open air, Sinclair decided for himself that he would bear me company. Together we ranged day after day over a tolerably extensive stretch of country, and became so intimate as to have no secrets from each other.

'What are they going to make of you?' asked Sinclair one afternoon, as we lay on Banstead Downs, watching the light white clouds drift across the blue sky. 'What do you want to be, Osmond?'

I had not thought about it, and I said so.

'You know I am going into the navy,' he said. 'You are not far from the age; and by the time you reach it, you will be tired of school and desk work. I am already.'

'But you will not enter the service yet?'

'I am nearly old enough, I believe,' he said; 'but I haven't thought about it.' Then, led by one of his sudden wilful impulses, he broke off the conversation, and springing up, began to leap the patches of heather; and so our talk was at an end.

He returned to the subject, however; and often scoffed at the idea which I sometimes ventured to put forward, that I might become a barrister or a doctor.

'Pshaw! Don't speak of barristers!' he would cry in high disgust. 'I never knew one yet who didn't smell of dust.'

'Have you known many?' I inquired.

'Quite enough to judge, or you may be sure I shouldn't speak of them.'

'Well, why not a doctor?'

'Why, you go from bad to worse. The lawyer was bad enough; but he was at least clean. A doctor spends his whole life in handling dirty people—one might as well be an attendant at a public wash-house at once. And then the perpetual atmosphere of sick-rooms! Phew! Osmond, you must clear up your mind about your occupation in life, or you'll drift into something mightily unpleasant.'

'But there are doctors in the navy,' I suggested.

'So there are cooks; but you and I don't wish to join them, I should think.'

I did not often protest further; and the conviction soon stole in upon my mind that the civilian occupations I had contemplated hitherto as possible for myself were all burdened with some degrading circumstance which would render them highly unpleasant to pursue.

It happened about the time when this new idea was rooting itself in my mind, that Admiral Sinclair visited us one day, and carried his nephew off to dine at an hotel at Epsom. I spent that afternoon in wandering about the house and garden in a forlorn sort of way, wishing idly that I had an uncle to visit me sometimes; and wondering whether, if I had, I should not ask him to take Sinclair too. I had just decided that I should, when a carriage drew up at the garden gate, and Sinclair leaped out from it.

'Osmond, come here,' he shouted; 'I want you to speak to my uncle.'

I went up to the carriage in some trepidation, and held out my hand shyly to the bluff old admiral, whose jolly weather-beaten face looked at me with a curious scrutiny.

'Well, my lad,' he bawled out in his great voice, 'you're a likely fellow! Can you jump, my boy?—Harry, can he jump?'

'Better than I can, uncle.'

'Ha! now, let's see you clear that gate. No touching, mind.'

I was better at a high jump than Sinclair, and I knew it, though he far excelled me in strength and endurance. We took a short run, and both cleared the gate; but while Sinclair only just avoided scraping it, there were several inches between my boots and the topmost bar. The admiral was hugely pleased.

'Capital, glorious!' he roared out.—'Harry, your friend is a fine fellow. I once saved my life by jumping.—Here, my boy, Harry says you would like to go into the navy?'

My heart beat fast as I assured him I should.

'Well, I will give you a nomination,' he said. 'Mind, there'll be an examination after that; so you must stick to your Euclid, and so on. Write to me in October, my boy, and tell me whether you are still in the same mind.'

'No fear of my changing it, sir,' I protested.

'So much the better. But write to me all the same.'

With that he slipped a sovereign into my hand, and drove off, vowing he should be late for his train.

'So it is settled,' said Sinclair as we stood watching the carriage. 'But what will your aunt say?'

'I don't think she will object.'

Sinclair shook his head. 'I suppose you will get your own way in the end,' he said. 'If you have any doubt about the matter, you had better say nothing until you see her.'

I thought this good advice, the more so as I was to go home in about a fortnight; and therefore in my letters to Aunt Cecilia, though I mentioned the admiral's visit, I made no reference to his offer. The very secrecy I observed, however, caused me to think the more about it; and my curiosity and interest being artfully fed by

Sinclair, I was in a state of great excitement for many days, and had much ado to restrain myself from giving it vent the moment I returned home.

I had sense enough to see that an important subject could not be broached in the midst of the bustle of greeting. Aunt Cecilia received me with tears in her eyes, which passed into smiles when she saw what a ruddy, healthy lad had returned to her in place of the ailing invalid who left her only six months before. 'My dear boy, you are copper-coloured,' she declared. 'You are like a savage.—Come in. I will pay the cabman and see to your luggage. Ah! child, the house has been very quiet since you went away.'

A pang of remorse shot through me as I heard these words. It seemed to me as if beneath the half-jesting tone in which they were uttered a deeper feeling lay, felt, perhaps, rather than admitted. In that moment I realised that I had ceased to be a child, and that my aunt was beginning to look towards me for companionship. And I—what was I proposing to myself but to leave her finally to grow old alone!

This impression passed away quickly enough. My aunt seemed as happy as a child in having me at home again: she was full of laughter and of jest; and related to me some droll experiences she had had among the poor people who were pensioners of hers. 'And you, Osmond,' she said when she had done, 'have you nothing to tell me?'

'Well, yes,' I said, reddening a little, 'I have. I told you in one of my letters that Admiral Sinclair had come to see us.'

'Yes, he made you jump a gate. He must be a kind-hearted old man, judging from what you said of him.'

'He offered me a nomination for the navy,' I blurted out.

Aunt Cecilia set down her teacup with a sudden snap and turned a grave face on me. 'For the navy; a nomination? Why should he have done that?'

'I don't know. Perhaps Sinclair asked him.'

'But what did he say?' my aunt persisted. 'Tell me exactly what he said—his very words.'

I told her as nearly as possible what had passed.

When I had done, she rose from her chair and walked about the room in evident perturbation. 'And you, what answer did you make?' she asked at length. 'Ah! child, you should have told me this before.'

'I said I should like to accept. I am to write to him in October, giving a final answer.'

'In October,' repeated my aunt with a sigh of relief. 'Then there is no hurry.'

'No, there is no hurry,' I replied; 'but I shall have an examination, and I may as well prepare for it.'

Aunt Cecilia frowned. 'Don't prepare for it, Osmond,' she said. 'I can't allow this to go on.' Then seeing how my face fell, she came up to me and passed her arm round my shoulder. 'My dear boy, is your heart very firmly set on this?' she asked in her kindest voice.

'Very firmly,' I said; 'but of course—'

'Of course you won't do anything to grieve me. I know that, child.' Here she patted my arm

gently, as if to express her conviction that the understanding between us was perfect.

'I see a very grave difficulty,' she said. 'I am afraid the plan must be given up. But let me think it over. I am taken by surprise. We will talk of it again to-morrow. Meantime, there is a poor woman waiting to see me. Her son is dying, I fear, of consumption, and she is just broken-hearted. Find me a book for him, Osmond—something light to hold and pleasant to read. I will come for it: don't you come out, for the poor creature is in sad trouble, and she won't want to see any one but me.'

A NESTING-PLACE OF SEA-GULLS.

BETWEEN the narrow wooded gorge of Glen Almond and the broad fertile valley of Strathearn stretches a long vale, embracing part of the parishes of Methven, Tibbermore, Madderty, &c., one-half of which drains westward to the Earn, and the other eastward to the Almond. The dividing-line is Methven Moss, from which two streams, both named Pow, flow east and west respectively. The eastern portion consists for the most part of arable land, interspersed here and there with bogs and woods. The most interesting of these bogs is the one popularly called the Gull Loch. The name is modern, having been given only a few years ago, when a colony of gulls, driven from a similar place near Dupplin, took possession of it for breeding purposes. Before this arrival, the bog was known as the Minkie Moss or the Cranberry Bog. The former name is suggestive of fairies, or rather water-kelpies, and the change to Gull Loch is indicative of the change of thought in modern minds, when, instead of ideal poetical figures like fairies, we substitute real, living, and not less beautiful sea-gulls.

The bog—for, despite its new name, it is only a bog—lies quite close to the main road from Perth to Crieff, and about half a mile distant from Almondbank Station. It stretches in the form of a crescent for nearly half a mile, having arable fields on the concave side and a thicket of oak, Scotch fir, and birch on the other. The centre of the bog consists of soft peat, overgrown with tufts of rushes and marsh-plants of all kinds; and this is the principal nesting-ground. Round this central part stretches a band of dark forbidding-looking water, in which the young gulls take their first swimming lessons, and then the look of the water becomes quite changed. A few broken, leafless, doddered stumps of trees grow at the edge of this encircling water, and help to give the dark chill marsh a more gruesome and uncanny aspect. In spring, marshes look more desolate and sombre than at any other time; for, while all around, the fields and woods and bypaths are bursting into the glory and beauty of their spring flowers, the cold dark waters of the swamp have not yet got the chill taken off, and the marsh-mallows and forget-me-nots are not yet showing themselves above the dismal slime or withered sedge. But the Gull Loch is an exception. Instead of spring flowers with

their white and yellow blossoms, nodding their heads in the breeze, we have thousands of gulls with their lovely white breasts and slate-coloured wings and chocolate heads; and instead of the dancing daffodils, we have the skimming, sailing flight of these sea-rovers with their shrill cries, which sound at a distance not unlike the beating of the waves on a rocky coast.

In the beginning of March, the bog, which has been untenanted save by a few wild ducks and coots throughout the winter, begins to be enlivened by detachments of gulls, which appear day after day, until the full number has arrived. Nesting generally begins in the early part of April. There is, properly speaking, no nest at all, but just a hollow place in the peat or in the bunches of rushes, in which they lay four or five dark spotted eggs, which bear a close resemblance to plovers' eggs, for which they are often mistaken. It has been calculated that as many as ten thousand gulls nest here every season, and the nests in consequence are placed very closely together; indeed, one nest is sometimes made to serve two pairs of birds; and a nest with eight eggs is no uncommon find. After the usual time the eggs are hatched, and then the pretty little chicks are to be seen running about on the peaty soil, or swimming slowly, like round gray balls, on the dark water.

One of the prettiest sights imaginable is to stand on the bank of the swamp in the morning or evening when the nearly level rays of the sun are glinting over the expanse of water and rushes, and watch the slow graceful flight of the gulls coming or going, or simply wheeling overhead in quiet enjoyment. If you fire a gun, the scene changes in a moment—from quiet beauty there is a change to wild shrieking tumult. Thousands of birds rise from the rushy cover and wheel about in endless confusion, uttering shrill, half-defiant screams at the intruder. After a time they begin to settle once more; and then, when seen against the dark background of Scotch firs, they look like large snow-flakes falling slowly down, such as one often sees at the beginning of a snow-storm. There is also the same picture of multitudinous bodies, which puzzles the eye and defies all attempts at enumeration.

It may be asked, 'Where do so many birds get sufficient food for themselves and their young ones?' As in large aggregations of human beings, there is sometimes considerable difficulty in getting supplies for all, and in dry seasons there is a good deal of hunger and starvation. Most of their food is got from the fields, and you may see them in great numbers following the plough and picking up insects, worms, &c. They also frequent the rivers, where they fish for minnows and other small aquatic creatures. During the summer they become very tame, and may be seen sitting in the village street and eagerly picking up the scraps of bread thrown to them by the children. As a community, they are socialists, all being equal and enjoying equal benefits and privileges. They also give us a very good example of kindness and good-feeling, for though crowded together in what must be a rather complex and puzzling manner, they seem always to be on the best of terms with each other, and such a thing as a fight is never seen among them. As soon as the young birds are sufficiently strong on the wing they begin to

migrate to the sea-shore; and by the end of summer the loch is quite deserted, except by the few ducks, coots, and water-hens which also nest there and stay on all the year round.

ON A RANGOON JURY.

THE scene is 'The Court of the Recorder of Rangoon'; the occasion, the first day of the autumn sessions; and the time ten A.M. on a scorching October day. The court-room and verandas which flank it are thronged with people of both sexes and all nations, whom curiosity or business has brought hither; among them ten or a dozen Englishmen who have been called as jurors, and do not seem to appreciate the prospective task. As a matter of fact, it is 'mail-day,' and they have had to leave their offices, where the weekly pile of mail-work is awaiting them, to dance attendance at the court, where their services may not be required after all.

His Honour the Recorder has taken his seat on the bench, and the clerk of the court produces a hat, from which he draws five names at hazard. Mine is the last to be called, and I follow the other jurors into the box under the sympathetic valedictory grins of my more fortunate fellow-countrymen who have been dismissed for the day.

'Elect your own foreman, gentlemen,' says the clerk when we have been sworn. And in deference to my status as the only pure European, my colleagues—three Eurasians and one aged Burman—unanimously appoint me to that office. The Recorder beams upon us good-humouredly for a few seconds, and then, resuming his wonted air of judicial gravity, directs the clerk to call the first case on the list.

The first case is not particularly interesting. Poonosawmy Moodliar, native of Madras, aged thirty-five, domestic servant in the employ of Septimus Balthazar, trader, of Rangoon, is placed in the dock charged with felony; and in that on the 19th day of September last he did steal and carry away one cotton umbrella, value one rupee two annas, the property of Moung Pho Loo. The clerk reads the charge at a hand-gallop, scorning the very elements of punctuation in a manner that must puzzle my Burmese coadjutor—'property of Moung Pho Loo Prisoner do you plead guilty or do you claim to be tried, &c.'

The prisoner, who is undefended, pleads not guilty; and in reply to the usual questions, says he has no objection to any gentleman on the jury, and that he understands English. This latter admission is highly satisfactory to all concerned. In cases where every word has to be interpreted just double the time is occupied, which is no small matter when the cause list is a heavy one. The Tamil interpreter sits down, and the case proceeds forthwith. The first witness is Moung Pho Loo, who identifies the umbrella—a ponderous structure of bright pink cotton—as his, and states that he laid it down on a stall in the Bura Bazaar on the morning of the 19th September, and next saw it in the prisoner's hands, a week later.

'No, sah!' from Poonosawmy, and 'Chuperao' ('Hold your tongue') from half-a-dozen policemen.

Moung Pho Loo having given his evidence, is ordered to stand down, and a Coringa policeman takes his place in the box. This witness is not a bright specimen. His evidence is rather difficult to extract, but is quite conclusive. He was on duty in the Burra Bazaar on the morning of the theft; saw prisoner take an umbrella off a fruit-stall and walk away with it; didn't stop him because he didn't know it was not his: that is the umbrella, lying there on the table. That is all.

Does Poonosawmy wish to ask this witness any questions? No; Poonosawmy is now weeping floods of penitent tears, and can only beg the Lord Sahib to forgive him; he is 'poor man,' and he thought the umbrella was his. Has he then any witnesses who could prove that he owned an umbrella like this? No, Poonosawmy has no witnesses, and he is poor man, sah. Has he nothing else to say in his defence? Yes; he wishes to add that he is poor man; very poor man, sah. If Poonosawmy had been charged with murder, high-treason, and incendiarism, he would have pled poverty in extenuation. It is a way the native has; but naturally it doesn't count for much in an English court of justice. A brief summing-up is followed by a briefer consultation, and a unanimous verdict of 'Guilty.' A previous conviction is proved against the prisoner; and Poonosawmy Moodliar, sentenced to six months' imprisonment, is removed, dolefully howling at the top of his voice.

The next case is one peculiar to Burma, and, fortunately, not very common even there. Nga Shway Oo and Nga Let Gyee, natives of Donabyoo, in the Irawadi district, are placed in the dock charged with the manslaughter of Moung Bah, native of the village of Panlang, in the Hanthawaddy district. They plead not guilty; and if an air of unmoved calm goes for anything, they don't believe themselves to be so.

From the Government Advocate's opening speech we gather the following facts. Early in the month of July last the two prisoners, travelling in their canoe from their own village of Donabyoo to Rangoon, stopped at Panlang to pass the night, and went to the house of Moung Bah, who was a friend of theirs, to sleep. In the course of the evening, Nga Shway Oo told the company how, during a recent visit to Mandalay, he had rendered some small service to a Hpoongyee (Buddhist priest), who had repaid it by teaching him a potent spell against death by drowning. Moung Bah, who was a fisherman by trade, was much interested in this; and after Nga Shway Oo had related some marvellous stories illustrating the infallibility of the spell, he implored that it might be cast upon himself; and the prisoner consented to exercise his powers for a consideration of five rupees. The money was promptly forthcoming; and Nga Shway Oo, producing the necessary implements, at once set to work to tattoo the figure of a paddy-bird (a species of egret) on the victim's chest, muttering incantations as he did so.

When the operation was finished, nothing would satisfy Moung Bah but an immediate trial of its efficacy; and as a full moon gave ample light, he insisted upon the prisoners taking him out in their canoe that he might put it to the test before he slept. Two other friends accompanied

the party, and a large number of the villagers assembled on the shore to watch the proceedings. Every Burman can swim like a duck from infancy, and though the tide in the Panlang creek is very powerful, with many dangerous undercurrents, any ordinary trial might have been made with perfect impunity. But Moung Bah, bent on making sure that he had got his money's worth, persuaded the two prisoners to bind him securely, hand and foot, before they tossed him overboard. They did so, then threw him into the water, and drifted down with the stream, awaiting the course of events. Whether they expected to see their friend rise to the surface freed from his bonds, or whether they imagined the 'spell' would cause him to float like a cork, the learned counsel is unable to tell us; but, as might have been expected, poor Moung Bah sank at once, and was never seen again till a few days afterwards, when his body was recovered thirty miles down the river.

The prisoners appear to have entertained no feelings but those of friendship and good-will towards the deceased, or they might have been charged with the greater crime of wilful murder. It will be proved, says the Government Advocate, that the facts of the case are exactly as he had stated them.

Mah Lay is the first witness; she is the wife of deceased, and was present when the first prisoner worked the spell upon her late husband. They had all eaten the evening rice together, and there had been no quarrelling of any kind. She heard Shway Oo tell some wonderful tales. Oh yes, she quite believed them, and does still. Doesn't understand why Moung Bah got drowned; thinks Shway Oo may have made some little mistake in the words he spoke while tattooing the 'inn'; or perhaps the moon wasn't favourable; anyhow, is sure that Shway Oo was not to blame; thinks it was an accident.

Moung Zan Way and Moung Hpay, cultivators, resident at Panlang, tell the same story in turn. The deceased was very anxious to be made proof against drowning, and begged the first prisoner to tattoo him. They accompanied him on the fatal trip; heard deceased request prisoners to pull right out into the stream, and also heard him ask to have his hands and feet tied; prisoners did so quite readily, and chewed betel while waiting for deceased to reappear. Yes, they were surprised when he didn't float on top of the water as he should have done. It was very curious indeed his sinking like that. Probably some slight miscalculation of Nga Shway Oo's. Moung Hpay thinks, moreover, it's just possible that deceased may have given offence to the water nats (spirits), who pulled him under water in revenge. Neither of these two witnesses thinks the prisoners are at all culpable; if any one is to blame for the accident it is the deceased himself; certainly not Shway Oo, who is a highly respectable man.

The English lawyer who represents the prisoners brings out most of this evidence by cross-examination; and when the last witness has been dismissed, delivers himself of a short speech dealing with the motives that actuated the pair of charlatans in the dock, and leaves the matter in the Recorder's hands. His summing up leaves no doubt in our minds that the

prisoners are guilty of manslaughter; and Messrs Pereira, Da Silva, and Aratoon, the Eurasians, record their opinion to that effect without hesitation. But our Burman colleague, Moung Htso, is not convinced. He is of good education, speaks English exceedingly well, and I know him personally as a sensible and intelligent man; but he is a Burman.

'Come, Moung Htso,' I say persuasively, 'we must return a unanimous verdict in such a case as this. Surely you don't doubt the men's guilt?'

'I think, sir, that they are good men. I do not think they wished to drown Moung Bah.'

'But they tied him and threw him into the river; so they committed manslaughter,' I urge.

Moung Htso shakes his head and twiddles his spectacle case. 'They did not think it would drown him,' he says seriously.

It is very obvious that an English education has not freed Moung Htso's mind from the trammels of superstition; and after ten minutes more argument, I am compelled to accept his, 'I do not think they did it,' as equivalent to 'Not guilty.' So, standing up in my place, I inform his Honour that the majority—four of us—pronounce the accused 'guilty of manslaughter.' The Recorder, looking straight at the punkah which waves over our heads, expresses his surprise that the evidence should have failed to bring conviction home to any one of the jury; he did not think there existed in Rangoon a juror so blind to the plainest facts. Not a quiver of the judicial eyelid conveys a hint that his Honour knows Moung Htso is the blind one; and that gentleman listens to his remarks with the stolidity of a wooden image.

Addressing the prisoners through his Burmese interpreter, the Recorder tells them that they have been found guilty of an act of incredible folly, which resulted in the death of a fellow-man. Taking all things into consideration, he cannot pass a sentence of less than three years' penal servitude on Nga Shway Oo, and of two years on Nga Let Gye. The prisoners appear thunderstruck; and the Burmese members of the audience, who have been listening to the case with rapt attention, are clearly taken by surprise also. Had the jury returned a verdict of 'Not guilty,' and the judge released the spell-worker and his assistant with a few well-chosen words of regret for the failure of their experiment, and advised them to make such in shallow water next time, it had created no astonishment. Far from it; they would have gone home sounding the praises of the wise English judge, whose great mind could justly weigh the mysterious uncertainty of Burmese magic; and in all reasonable likelihood Nga Shway Oo and Nga Let Gye would have found a score of confiding patients willing to be drowned at five rupees a head, as soon as they got out of court. English law is a long way above the Burman's comprehension, and in these matters always will be.

The next case again throws a lurid light upon Burmese powers of belief, but in a manner less grave than the last. Nga Loogalay is placed in the dock charged with cheating. Nga Loogalay, it appears, is a gentleman of no ordinary attainments, and among other desirable talents he possesses the highly lucrative ability to turn baser

metals into gold. About three months ago he made the acquaintance of Mah Too, an old lady residing in Rangoon, where she drove a snug little trade in dried fish. Like many other old ladies, Mah Too was of somewhat avaricious disposition, hence the knowledge of Nga Loogalay's alchemic accomplishments commended him strongly to her notice; and a few days after the first occasion of their meeting she entrusted him with a sum of thirty rupees, which he kindly undertook to convert into gold. The terms of the transaction were rather sporting in character, and may be shortly described as 'Play or Pay'—in other words, it was agreed that if Nga Loogalay failed to effect transmutation within a given time, he was to charge nothing. If he succeeded, he was to receive a handsome percentage on results. The scientific nature of the prisoner's profession enabled him to dispense with the vulgar necessity of giving her a receipt for the money, so she has nothing to show for it. But we are promised a number of witnesses who will substantiate the charge, to which Nga Loogalay enters a plea of 'Not guilty.'

The various threads of evidence must make it palpable even to our friend Moung Htso that a very singular degree of ill-luck followed the prisoner throughout the whole course of this little affair. No sooner had he received the thirty rupees than the market price of mercury and other alchemic requisites began to advance, and continued to do so by leaps and bounds until they reached a level quite unheard of; which compelled Nga Loogalay to borrow small sums from Mah Too every week to meet the expense of conducting the operation; these working expenses were to be deducted from his share of the profits; and Mah Too confessed that she had been very much struck by the honesty with which he retained the first-given sum intact.

Nga Loogalay was an enthusiastic scientist, judging from the complainant's account. He sat up every propitious night for six weeks watching his crucibles and working charms with untiring diligence; but gold didn't come. He called upon Mah Too regularly during this period, and was able to give such satisfactory reports of his progress, that she was easily induced to part with the money he required from time to time, which amounted in all to some fifty-five rupees. Half-a-dozen times he was just on the very verge of succeeding, when a cloud obscured the moon, or the wind dropped suddenly, or something else happened and spoilt the whole business.

Mah Too was quite aware of the extreme exactness and nicety required in the operation, and forbore to press for tangible results so long as she saw prisoner regularly. But one day, not having seen him for a fortnight, she grew anxious, and went out to his house at Kemendine—a suburb of Rangoon—to ask how things were getting on. There she saw Mah Hlah, his wife, who informed her that Nga Loogalay had gone to Mandalay on urgent business, and she couldn't exactly say when he would be back. He had not forgotten his contract with Mah Too, however; indeed, it was solely in connection with this gold-making business that her husband was visiting Mandalay; there are great *sayahs* in that

city, and he had gone to consult with them ; for she frankly admitted that, up to now, Nga Loogalay had not attained the degree of success so clever an alchemist was entitled to expect.

Now, this story was very plausible, and even gratifying, and had Mah Too been a more confiding old party, she would have accepted it in a proper spirit, smoked a cheroot with Mah Hlah, exchanged a little gossip, and walked quietly home to Rangoon in the cool of the evening. But unhappily (for Nga Loogalay) she was dissatisfied with the report, and hinted at taking her rupees back in their original condition. The dried fish industry, she said, was not thriving so well as could be wished ; she was completely out of cheroots and betel-nut, and, to be candid, she wanted a little ready money at once.

Mah Hlah appears to have regarded this as an indication of growing scepticism, and resented it, like the loyal wife she was, with some warmth : and when she declared to Mah Too that she hadn't a single *hmat* (four-anna bit) in the house, high words began. To make a long story short, the two ladies interchanged vigorous personalities for three-quarters of an hour, at the end of which time Mah Too proceeded to the police station, and laid an information against Nga Loogalay for swindling her.

Search was instituted without delay, and the missing alchemist was arrested, not at Mandalay—which in those days would have been a safe harbour—but at Poozoondoung, the eastern suburb of Rangoon, not five miles from his own home.

It might have been his ardent pursuit of scientific knowledge that led him to the Chinese gambling den where he was discovered ; or possibly, he thought that the 'thirty-six animal game' would be an agreeable relaxation after so much studious research ; his presence there, I say, was a detail that might have been satisfactorily explained. But when it came out that of all Mah Too's fifty-five rupees he had not a pice left, Nga Loogalay had no right to be surprised at the superintendent's locking him up.

The very small amount of confidence we on the jury had ever entertained in the prisoner's probity, was quite dispelled by these final revelations ; and we felt bound to bring him in 'guilty,' in spite of the dissentient voice once more upraised by Moung Htsø. There was no reasoning with that stubborn old gentleman. He firmly adhered to his own private opinion, that had Nga Loogalay been allowed sufficient time, he would have triumphantly returned to Mah Too the promised ingot of pure gold. As for the gambling-house part of the affair, that was a mere accident that might have befallen anybody ; all Burmans gamble more or less, and he didn't see why we should lay any particular stress upon it. And once more our Burmese fellow-juror was made the indirect subject of a few scathing remarks by his Honour the Recorder.

Moung Htsø informed me afterwards in confidence that transmutation was a very difficult thing to accomplish ; most difficult. But every sayah worthy of the name agreed that it could be done if you could only find out the right way. It was true he had never met any one yet who had achieved success ; but that was no proof whatever of its impossibility. Nga Loogalay, now sentenced to twelve months in jail, had

been very hardly used ; and for his—Moung Htsø's—part, if he happened to want any money turned into gold by-and-by, and hadn't time to devote himself to the job, he should cheerfully entrust it to Nga Loogalay.

THE ROMANCE OF WASHING.

It is wonderful how every little duty and necessity of every-day life is surrounded with a halo of charm and legendary lore. Some things seem so simple and practical, that we imagine that nothing of a weird description can possibly be associated with them, yet in many instances the simpler the operation the greater the affinity it appears to have for things supernatural. Off-hand, we should say that Washing cannot be invested with any romance ; but old wives will tell us otherwise. Woe betide the person that dares to wash his or her hands in the same basin of water that has been or will be used by another individual ! They will be sure to quarrel. Or, again, if you wipe your hands upon the same towel and at the same time with another person, you and that person will at some period of your lifetime go begging together. The late Cuthbert Bede, however, tells us that he was informed in Rutlandshire that these dreadful things would not happen provided you first made the sign of the cross over the water. Another curious thing, too, in connection with this is that the quarrel only supervened when a basin of water was used. You might wash together in a running stream as often as you pleased and no ill effect would come of it.

Washing the feet seems to be intimately connected with weddings. In the old Roman days the feet of the bride and bridegroom were washed after the ceremony had been performed. The custom of washing the bride's feet does not seem to have been so prevalent as that of washing the bridegroom's. Wood, in his 'Wedding-day in all Ages,' only gives one instance of the former. He says : 'Among the ancient Poles the bride walked three times round a fire, then sat down and washed her feet.' He refers more frequently to washing the bridegroom's feet. In India the daughter of a Brahmin is dressed by her father in a festive dress, and washes the bridegroom's feet, the bride's mother pouring out the water for that purpose. In Malabar the bridegroom's feet are washed by a young relation ; and in some parts of Java the bride, as a sign of her subjection, kneels and washes the feet of the bridegroom when he enters the house.

Somewhat analogous customs prevail amongst the agricultural classes of the east of Scotland. The actual ceremony is falling somewhat into desuetude, though the 'feet-washing' is still the name given to an evening of hilarious enjoyment preceding the marriage by a day or two. The practice is common in the north of Scotland both in relation to bride and bridegroom ; and so far as the latter is concerned, usually gives rise to some horse-play. A writer upon the subject, a few years back, says : 'I have a lively recollection of a relative of my own, a bridegroom, taking flight one winter night from his persecutors, who

were subjecting him to very rough usage in the cleansing operation. They were using a hard scrubbing-brush and brick-dust. The victim, rather than endure the torture, ran a considerable distance, barefoot and bare-legged, through snow lying a dozen inches deep, and took refuge in an outhouse, where he shut himself securely in.'

The operators are always anxious that the water should, after washing, bear witness to the fact that the victim was much in need of it; they therefore often plaster him to the knees with an unsavoury compound of hog's lard, soot, and perhaps other ingredients. The operation, no doubt, is highly satisfactory to all concerned, with the exception of the unfortunate victim.

Washerwomen have such a character for garrulity that one is surprised to find such a paucity of sayings emanating from this class. The one rhyme they possess, however, seems to be pretty generally spread all over the country. In Dr Robert Chambers's 'Popular Rhymes of Scotland,' we find the Scotch version as under :

They that wash on Monday
Hae a' the week to dry;
They that wash on Tuesday
Are no far by;
They that wash on Wednesday
Are no sair to mean;*
They that wash on Thursday
May get their claes clean;
They that wash on Friday
Hae gey meikle need;
They that wash on Saturday
Are dirty daws indeed.

The Welsh of Glamorgan have a saying which is undoubtedly an adaptation of the latter part of the above. Translated freely, it reads :

Who washes on Friday
Is half a slut;
Who washes on Saturday
Is a slut to the bone.

The English version of the rhyme resembles the Scotch very much :

Wash on a Monday,
You have all the week to dry;
Wash on a Tuesday,
Very nigh;
Wash on a Wednesday,
A very good day;
Wash on a Thursday,
But clear all away;
Wash on a Friday,
Wash for need;
Wash on a Saturday,
Sluts indeed.

Like every other occupation, washing has its unlucky days, days on which the cleansing operation must on no account be performed. In parts of Cornwall, it is held that no washing should be done on New-year's Day; and not only this, but it is considered most unlucky to have any washing done in the house between Christmas Day and New-year's Day, so that even towels are left unwashed. If any washing takes place, it is feared that some one of the family will be washed out of life or an accident of a fatal nature happen before the close of the new year. Good-Friday also was regarded as a most unlucky day on which to wash; the suds of any washing done on that day would, it was believed, be turned

into blood. Nor was any suds from the previous day's washing to remain till Good-Friday morning, for fear it would also turn to blood.

In Tom Hood's time, steam laundries inaugurated by men first made their appearance, and many humorous verses he penned in the name of the distressed ladies of the wash-tub. It may not be entirely the fault of our sisters that they are invading the sphere of man's labour; they are only taking a leaf from our own books.

THE MOUNTAINS.

ALL through the frozen land we sped,
Through cuttings white and marshes drear;
Through black plantations, grim and dead,
And forest giants darkly sere.

The landscape fled and passed below,
And gazing still, we saw no more
Than one great cheerless waste of snow,
An ocean with no farther shore;

Until the mountains rose around,
So sternly from the icy earth,
And beauty, though rejected, found
A home in her own very dearth.

Cold they were, pride intensified
In every line so gaunt and grim—
A mantle and a pall of pride,
That lingered when all else grew dim.

The rocky heads all powdered o'er,
And in the valley far below
A forest tangle, and once more
A long and stainless slope of snow.

They seemed as mourning for the past,
In hopeless mourning for an age
So distant now, its records cast
But mystery on earth's dim page.

They seemed as frowning on the eye
That arrogantly dared to read
The secret thoughts they laid so by,
And to such silence had decreed.

They seemed as wrapped in voiceless scorn
Too passionless to stoop to hate,
That anything of mortal born
Should dare one thought to penetrate.

I met them, and I left them so,
Still watching from their fortress white,
Their cold, vast citadel of snow,
To see the first approach of night:

Longing to feel its shadows glide,
And veil their grief and bide their pain,
With eager longing, even pride,
Though measureless, could not restrain.

LILLIAN WINSTANLEY.

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* Not greatly to be pitied.